

Budget clash pits moderate Democrats against Biden, Pelosi

By KEVIN FREKING
and ALAN FRAM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Confronting their party's most powerful leaders, nine moderate Democrats are tapping the brakes on President Joe Biden's multitrillion-dollar domestic program and insisting on their own priorities. The inter-party showdown is headed for a test vote Monday evening in the House.

The band of moderates has threatened to oppose a \$3.5 trillion budget blueprint unless the House first approves a \$1 trillion package of road, power grid, broadband and other infrastructure projects that's already passed the Senate. They could conceivably sink the fiscal blueprint in the narrowly divided House.

With most of Biden's domestic agenda at stake, it's unimaginable that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., would let her own party's centrists deal him an embarrassing defeat. That's especially true with the president already under criticism over his handling of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and with Democrats' prospects uncertain in the 2022 elections for control of Congress.

Pelosi implored lawmakers Monday afternoon to come together, saying there is no time to waste.



In his Aug. 10, 2021, file photo, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi speaks regarding the Emergency Rental Assistance program in San Francisco.

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Budget clash pits moderate Democrats against Biden, Pelosi

Continued from Front

"We must not squander our Congressional Democratic Majorities and jeopardize the once-in-a-generation opportunity to create historic change to meet the needs of working families," she said in a letter to colleagues before the session. Members of the House returned to Washington on Monday in what Democratic leaders hope will be just a two-day interruption of lawmakers' August recess to make gains on Biden's priorities. Leaders want quick approval of the budget resolution, which will set the stage this fall for setting further legislation directing \$3.5 trillion at safety net, environment and other programs over the next decade. Lawmakers were scheduled to huddle privately before the vote for a caucus meeting.

That huge measure comprises the heart of Biden's vision for helping families and combating climate change and is progressives' top priority, all of it largely financed with tax increases on the rich and big business.

But the moderates want Congress to quickly send the smaller, bipartisan infrastructure measure to Biden so he can sign it before the political winds shift. That would nail down a victory they could point to in their reelection campaigns next year.

"The House can't afford to wait months or do anything to risk passing" the infrastructure bill, Rep. Josh Gottheimer, D-N.J., said late last week. He's a leader of the nine moderate mavericks who each released statements reaffirming a desire that the infrastructure vote come first, and others may join them.



In this Dec. 21, 2020, file photo, Rep. Josh Gottheimer, D-N.J., speaks to the media on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

Pelosi, backed by the White House, is leading her party in a tightly-scripted strategy that aims to keep moderate and progressive lawmakers on board for what would be a landmark federal investment and the cornerstone of Biden's domestic policy agenda. In the narrowly divided Congress, to pass any legislation over solid GOP opposition, Democrats can lose no more than three votes in the House.

The Monday evening procedural vote on the infrastructure measures, as well as a voting rights bill, another top Democratic goal, will test the strategy ahead. Some solution averting a Biden setback in the House seems likely. Leaders were in talks with lawmakers signaling they want both infrastructure bills passed

by Oct. 1, an ambitious schedule. Pelosi, top House Democrat since 2003, has a long history of doing what it takes to line up the votes she needs on important issues.

So far, neither the moderates nor the powerful forces confronting them were showing signs of budging. The party's progressive members are vowing to withhold their votes on the infrastructure bill unless the larger measure focused on expanding child care, Medicare and providing for paid family leave is passed. Biden met virtually with Pelosi and other Democratic leaders and committee chairs late last week. In a show of solidarity, the White House and Pelosi issued similar statements afterward underscoring their determination to approve

both measures soon and pointedly ignoring moderates' demand to do infrastructure first.

Unless the moderates decide to oppose the procedural measure, Democrats controlling the chamber 220-212 should be able to push it through.

Among moderates, Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Texas, said in an interview, "No progressive is going to cram something down my throat." Rep. Jared Golden, D-Maine, said failure to pass the infrastructure bill quickly "leaves the nation's economy and crumbling infrastructure hostage to political gamesmanship." On the other side, progressive leader Rep. Katie Porter, D-Calif., said in an interview that Democrats "not actively supporting" Biden's priorities "are not moder-

ates," suggesting they're conservative.

The group Justice Democrats, which recruits progressive candidates including challengers to congressional incumbents, released a fundraising appeal saying Gottheimer was being supported by "the worst of the political establishment." It did not identify them.

Lawmakers from both parties began Monday making their pitches prior to this week's votes.

Democratic lawmakers framed the votes as a chance to build on the \$1.9 trillion COVID-relief bill that Congress passed earlier this year that provided \$1,400 stimulus checks to most Americans, boosted unemployment insurance payments and expanded the child tax credit, among other things.

"Long before the pandemic, decades of federal under-investment in climate, education, housing, childcare, health care and other sectors have made it harder for American families to make ends meet and for American businesses to complete globally," said Rep. John Yarmuth, the Democratic chairman of the House Budget Committee. "We must close these deficits now."

Republicans said the \$3.5 trillion effort that Democrats are seeking to advance fails to address "the crisis that American families are facing" and would lead to higher inflation and deficits.

"The inflation crisis, the border crisis, the energy crisis, the Afghanistan crisis — this budget only makes it worse," said Rep. Jason Smith of Missouri, top Republican on the House Budget Committee. □

U.S. regulators give full approval to Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
and MATTHEW PERRONE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. gave full approval to Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine Monday, potentially boosting public confidence in the shots and instantly opening the way for more universities, companies and local governments to make vaccinations mandatory. The Pentagon promptly announced it will press ahead with plans to require members of the military to get vaccinated amid the battle against the extra-contagious delta variant. Louisiana State University likewise said it will demand its students get the shot.

More than 200 million Pfizer doses have been administered in the U.S. under special emergency provisions — and hundreds of millions more worldwide — since December. In going a step further and granting full approval, the Food and Drug Administration cited months of real-world evidence that serious side effects are extremely rare. President Joe Biden said that for those who hesitated to get the vaccine until it received what he dubbed the "gold standard" of FDA approval, "the moment you've been waiting for is here."

"Please get vaccinated today," he said.

Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla called the FDA's action "an important milestone that I think will unlock some of the more skeptical minds."

Pfizer said the U.S. is the first country to grant full approval of its vaccine, in a process that required a 360,000-page application and rigorous inspections. Never before has the FDA had so much evidence to judge a shot's safety.

The formula, jointly developed with Germany's BioNTech, will be marketed under the brand name Comirnaty.

Moderna has also applied to the FDA for full approval of its vaccine. Johnson & Johnson, maker of the third option in the U.S., said it hopes to do so later this year.



In this March 2, 2021, file photo, pharmacy technician Hollie Maloney loads a syringe with Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine at the Portland Expo in Portland, Maine.

Associated Press

Just over half of the U.S. population is fully vaccinated. Vaccinations in this country bottomed out in July at an average of about a half-million shots per day, down from a peak of 3.4 million a day in mid-April. As the delta variant fills hospital beds, shots are on the rise again, with a million a day given Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Full approval of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine means it meets the same "very high standards required of all the approved vaccines we rely on every day," said Dr. Jesse Goodman of Georgetown University, a former FDA vaccine chief. That should help "anyone who still has concerns gain confidence" in the shots.

Earlier this month, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said he would seek the president's OK to make the vaccine mandatory by mid-September or once the FDA grants final approval, whichever comes first. On Monday, after the FDA acted, the Pentagon said guidance on vaccinations will be worked out and a timeline will be provided in the coming days.

The approval also opened the way for swift action by colleges to require vaccines and solidified the legal ground for hundreds of universities that have already issued mandates for students and staff.

LSU, with over 30,000 stu-

dents, acted amid a surge in Louisiana that has repeatedly broken records for the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19. Some major college systems such as the University of Minnesota said they were waiting for FDA approval before making vaccinations mandatory. But some states forbid universities to require shots, including Texas and Florida.

"Mandating becomes much easier when you have full approval," said Dr. Carlos del Rio of Emory University. "I think a lot of businesses have been waiting for it."

On the same day the FDA decision came down, New York City announced that all public school teachers and other staffers will have to get vaccinated.

Earlier this month, New York City, New Orleans and San Francisco all imposed proof-of-vaccination requirements at restaurants, bars and other indoor venues. At the federal level, Biden is requiring government workers to sign forms attesting that they have been vaccinated or else submit to regular testing and other requirements.

Anxious Americans increasingly are on board: Close to 6 in 10 favor requiring people to be fully vaccinated to fly or attend crowded public events, according to a recent poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center

for Public Affairs Research. The delta variant has sent cases, deaths and hospitalizations soaring in recent weeks in the U.S., erasing months of progress. Deaths are running at about 1,000 a day on average for the first time since mid-March, and new cases are averaging 147,000 a day, a level last seen at the end of January.

"For weeks we have watched cases go up at an alarming pace among individuals who are not vaccinated while the vaccinated are largely protected," said Dr. Tomas J. Aragon, director of California's public health department. "If you are not vaccinated, let this be the milestone that gets you there."

The FDA, like regulators in Europe and much of the rest of the world, initially allowed emergency use of Pfizer's vaccine based on a study that tracked 44,000 people 16 and older for at least two months — the time period when serious side effects typically arise. That's shorter than the six months of safety data normally required for full approval. So Pfizer kept that study going, and the FDA also examined real-world safety evidence.

Pfizer's shot will continue to be dispensed to 12- to 15-year-olds under an emergency use authorization, until the company files its application for full ap-

proval.

Normally, doctors can prescribe FDA-approved products for other reasons than their original use. But FDA's acting Commissioner Dr. Janet Woodcock strongly warned that the Pfizer vaccine should not be used "off-label" for children under 12 — a warning echoed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Both Pfizer and Moderna have vaccine studies underway in youngsters, and they are using lower doses than those available for people 12 and older.

Pfizer's Bourla said he expects study results from 5- to 11-year-olds by the end of September, but data for those younger than 5 will take a couple of months.

Also, Woodcock said health providers are offering COVID-19 vaccines under agreements with the government that should preclude using Monday's approval as a pretext for offering booster shots to the general population.

Currently, the FDA has authorized third doses of either Pfizer's or Moderna's vaccine only for certain people with severely weakened immune systems, such as organ transplant recipients. For everyone else, the Biden administration is planning for boosters starting in the fall. But the FDA is evaluating that question separately.

In reaching Monday's decision, the FDA said serious side effects remain very rare, such as chest pain and heart inflammation a few days after the second dose, mostly in young men. As for effectiveness, six months into Pfizer's original study, the vaccine remained 97% protective against severe COVID-19. Protection against milder infection waned slightly, from a peak of 96% two months after the second dose to 84% by six months. Those findings came before the delta variant began spreading, but other data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows the vaccine is still doing a good job preventing severe disease. □

As Cuomo exits, he takes last swipe at harassment probe

By **MARINA VILLENEUVE**

Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — Andrew Cuomo defended his record over a decade as New York's governor and portrayed himself as the victim of a "media frenzy" Monday as he prepared for a midnight power transfer that will make Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul the state's first female governor.

Cuomo, a Democrat, was set to end his term at 11:59 p.m., just under two weeks after he announced he would resign rather than face a likely impeachment battle over sexual harassment allegations.

Hochul was scheduled to be sworn in just after midnight by the state's chief judge, Janet DiFiore, in a brief, private ceremony.

In a pre-recorded farewell address released at noon, Cuomo boasted of making government effective in his years in office, cited his work battling the COVID-19 pandemic and struck a defiant tone on the harassment allegations.

He said the report that triggered his resignation — a scathing account of what Attorney General Letitia James said was sexual harassment or inappropriate touching of 11 women — as "designed to be a political firecracker on an explosive topic, and it did work," Cuomo said. "There was a political and media stampede."

Cuomo said Monday alle-



This image made from video provided by the New York Governor's Office shows New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo giving a farewell speech, Monday, Aug. 23, 2021 in New York.

Associated Press

gations must still be "scrutinized and vetted."

Cuomo also touted his "progressive" record and positioned himself as a bulwark against his party's leftwing faction that he said wants to "defund the police" and "demonize businesses." He touted New York's long-awaited passage of same sex marriage under his administration, as well as gun control legislation, a law setting an eventual statewide \$15 minimum wage and New York's efforts in spring 2020 to reduce COVID-19 infections.

Some critics jumped on

Cuomo's last remarks as self-serving.

Assemblymember Yuh-Line Niou, a fellow Democrat, tweeted he had a hundred million opportunities to improve as a leader and "Chose himself every time. Goodbye, Governor Cuomo."

The switch in leadership was happening in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Henri, which narrowly missed Long Island on Sunday but dumped rain over parts of the Catskill Mountains and Hudson River Valley.

The storm drew Cuomo

back out into public view over the weekend, albeit briefly.

He gave two televised briefings — warning New Yorkers to take the storm seriously with the same mix of scolding and reassurance that once made his daily COVID-19 briefings popular.

Cuomo's top aide, Melissa DeRosa, released a statement that the governor was exploring his options for his post-gubernatorial life but had "no interest in running for office again." Polling suggests Cuomo's long-loyal base of Democratic

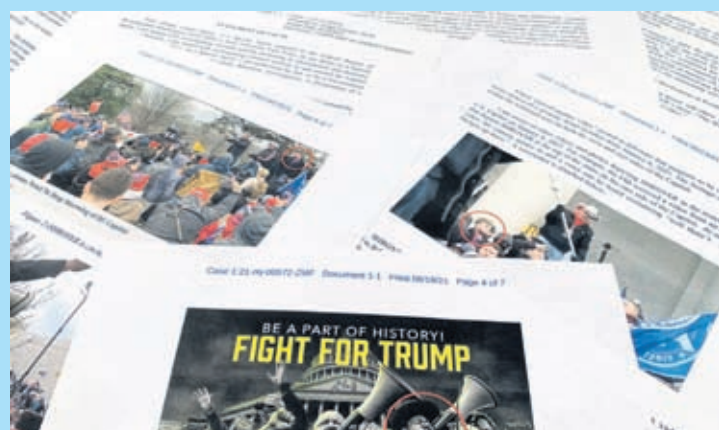
voters has eroded this year. But Lindsey Boylan, a former Cuomo senior aide who testified that the governor sexually harassed her, questioned Cuomo's political ambitions given his \$18 million campaign war chest. She asked in a tweet what the purpose of the money was "beyond to use smearing me and other survivors I mean, of course?"

Hochul will inherit immense challenges as she takes over an administration facing criticism for inaction in Cuomo's distracted final months in office. For one, COVID-19 has refused to abate.

Hochul, also a Democrat, announced the planned appointments Monday of two top aides: Karen Persichilli Keogh will become Secretary to the Governor and Elizabeth Fine will be Hochul's chief legal counsel.

She plans to keep on Cuomo-era employees for 45 days to allow her time to interview new hires, but said she will not keep anyone found to have behaved unethically. At least 35 employees in the governor's office have left since February, according to staff rosters.

Hochul, who said she didn't work closely with Cuomo and wasn't aware of the harassment allegations before they became public, has vowed no one will ever call her workplace "toxic." □



This complaint supporting the arrest warrant for Owen Shroyer is photographed in Frederick, Md., Friday, Aug. 20, 2021.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The host of a program for the right-wing website Infowars, Owen Shroyer, is in custody after being

charged in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol, officials said Monday.

Shroyer, who hosts "The War Room With Owen

Infowars host in custody to face charges in Jan. 6 riot

Shroyer" for the website operated by conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, said on air Friday that he had to turn himself in to authorities Monday morning to face misdemeanor charges stemming from Jan. 6.

He was scheduled to appear in federal court in Texas later Monday. Shroyer said in a video posted Sunday that he is "obviously completely innocent of the charges." "Quite frankly, I'm confused," he

said. "I'm confused at the allegations and the charges." Shroyer is charged with crimes including disorderly conduct and entering a restricted area of Capitol grounds. He was seen on the west side of the Capitol next to the inauguration stage as well as at the top of the stairs on the east side of the Capitol, according to court documents. He is not accused of going into the Capitol building.

During an address at Freedom Plaza the day before the insurrection, he said, according to the court papers: "Americans are ready to fight. We're not exactly sure what that's going to look like perhaps in a couple of weeks if we can't stop this certification of the fraudulent election ... we are the new revolution!"

We are going to restore and we are going to save the republic!" □

UK struggles for influence as Afghan crisis strains U.S. ties

By JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

LONDON (AP)—The messy exit of Western military forces from Afghanistan and the swift takeover of the country by the Taliban has stunned officials in Britain and strained the U.K.'s "special relationship" with its most important ally, the United States.

London's powerlessness, so far, to change Washington's course also is a blow to U.K. hopes that an assertive "Global Britain" will be a major global player in the wake of its exit from the European Union.

The main stumbling block ahead of an emergency summit of Group of Seven leaders on Tuesday is a deadline for the U.S. effort to evacuate thousands of Americans, Afghans and others from Kabul. U.S. troops are scheduled to end their mission on Aug. 31, and Britain wants an extension.

President Joe Biden left open that possibility, but the Taliban call the date a "red line," saying that prolonging the American presence would "provoke a reaction."

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has spoken to Biden only once in recent weeks two days after the Taliban took Kabul and called the virtual G-7 meeting in hope of having some impact on the chaotic course of events. Britain currently holds the presidency of the club of wealthy nations.

British officials acknowledge the limits of their influence, saying the airlift will end when American troops depart.

"We have previously spoken to other NATO countries about staying, and that didn't prove to be a viable option," said Johnson's spokesman, Max Blain.

"We are going to need

to leave the airport at the same time as the Americans."

Defense Secretary Ben Wallace, who has called the

relationship" a phrase used since World War II to stress the bonds of history, friendship and shared diplomatic interests between London

championed by the populist, crowd-pleasing Johnson, and once called him a "physical and emotional clone" of former President

pandemic, makes "Global Britain" little more than a slogan.

And they accuse the government of a slow and disorganized response to the Afghanistan crisis. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab was on vacation in Greece as the Taliban swept toward the Afghan capital, returning a day after Kabul fell on Aug. 15.

Johnson spoke to Biden by phone on Aug. 17, two days after the fall of Kabul. In a bland statement after the call, Johnson's office said they "resolved to continue working closely together on this in the days and weeks ahead to allow as many people as possible to leave the country." British media reported that it took Biden 36 hours to return the British leader's call.

U.K. Armed Forces Minister James Heappey acknowledged that Britain would have liked "a more conditions-based" U.S. withdrawal, but he insisted the special relationship remains strong.

"Of course when you disagree with your closest friend it hurts, it causes consternation on both sides of the relationship," he told Sky News. "But absolutely nobody should think that the U.S. and the U.K. have anything but the deepest and strongest of relationships."

Thomas Giff, director of the Center on U.S. Politics at University College London, said events in Afghanistan "will make other Western powers more steely eyed about the reality that, even under Biden, U.S. leadership will pursue policies that it sees in its own interests, regardless of criticism by the international community." But he said Biden remained much more of an international team player than Trump.

"What we're seeing here is not simply a diluted version of an 'America first, America alone' foreign policy," he said.

"We're seeing Biden on one issue granted, a hugely important one reach a different conclusion than many other global leaders." □



In this photo issued by Britain's Ministry of Defence (MoD), showing members of UK Armed Forces who are working to evacuate entitled personnel from Afghanistan's Kabul airport, Monday Aug. 23, 2021.

Associated Press

U.S. deal with the Taliban that set the Aug. 31 deadline a "mistake," struck an almost pleading tone, saying that if Biden extended the operation "even by a day or two, that will give us a day or two more to evacuate people."

"Because we are really down to hours now, not weeks, and we have to make sure we exploit every minute to get people out." About 1,000 British soldiers are stationed at Kabul's airport, alongside about 6,000 American troops, to manage the evacuation.

Senior U.K. military officers have expressed anger over the U.S. pullout from Afghanistan, saying it exposes the hollowness of the trans-Atlantic "special re-

lationship" and Washington.

More than 150,000 British troops served in Afghanistan in the years after the U.S.-led 2001 invasion the largest contingent after the Americans and 457 died in the campaign.

Biden had warm words about the alliance when he and Johnson met for the first time at a G-7 summit in England in June.

"We affirmed the special relationship it's not said lightly the special relationship between our people," Biden said.

Although the two leaders struck a positive tone when they met, they have very different temperaments. Biden staunchly opposed Britain's exit from the European Union that was

Donald Trump.

Britain's lack of clout with Washington underscores the fragility of Johnson's goal of making post-Brexit "Global Britain" a key international player and bridge between the U.S. and Europe.

Leaders across Europe were relieved when Biden replaced Trump, an isolationist who repeatedly disparaged NATO and insulted America's allies. Biden renewed U.S. commitment to global climate change targets, which Trump had ripped up, and reassured allies that the U.S. was back as a reliable partner.

But he has stuck to Trump's commitment to end the U.S. war in Afghanistan, even as the speed of the Taliban takeover this month caught Washington and its allies by surprise.

Opponents say Johnson's unwillingness to work closely with the EU and his decision to slash Britain's foreign aid budget, citing the economic blow of the



Rights group: Israeli strikes on Gaza apparently broke law

By JOSEF FEDERMAN

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli airstrikes that demolished four high-rise buildings in the Gaza Strip during the war in May apparently violated international laws of war, a leading international human rights group said Monday, calling on the Israeli military to produce evidence justifying the attacks.

Human Rights Watch noted that although no one was harmed in the airstrikes, the attacks damaged neighboring buildings, left dozens of people homeless and destroyed scores of businesses.

"The apparently unlawful Israeli strikes on four high-rise towers in Gaza City caused serious, lasting harm for countless Palestinians who lived, worked, shopped or benefited from businesses based there," said Richard Weir, crisis and conflict researcher for Human Rights Watch. "The Israeli military should publicly produce the evidence that it says it relies on to carry out these attacks."

In response to the report, the Israeli military accused Hamas and other militant groups of using the buildings for military purposes



In this May 15, 2021 file photo, the al-Jalaa building housing the offices of The Associated Press and other media and home to dozens of families, collapses after it was hit by an Israeli airstrike, in Gaza City.

and turning their occupants into human shields.

"The assets Hamas tried to hide inside these multistory buildings ... were often of particularly high military value, and successfully striking them was of strategic importance," it said.

It was the New York-based group's third report on the 11-day war. It has previously accused Israel of apparent

war crimes for attacks that it said had no clear military targets but killed dozens of civilians.

It also has said that Hamas' rockets were fired indiscriminately at Israeli cities, constituting a war crime. Both sides denied the accusations.

The war erupted on May 10 after Hamas fired a barrage of rockets toward Je-

rusalem in support of Palestinian protests against Israel's heavy-handed policing of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest site in Islam, and the threatened eviction of dozens of Palestinian families by Jewish settlers in a nearby neighborhood.

In all, some 260 people were killed in Gaza, including at least 66 children and 41 women, according to

U.N. figures. Hamas has acknowledged the deaths of 80 militants, though Israel says that number is much higher.

Twelve civilians, including two children, were killed in Israel, along with one soldier.

Israel's destruction of Palestinian high-rises was one of its most controversial wartime tactics. Among the targets was the 12-story al-Jalaa building, which housed the local offices of The Associated Press. The building was also home to dozens of families.

The AP has called on Israel to make public the evidence it used to justify the demolition of the al-Jalaa building. Israel has said Hamas operatives were using the building for a sophisticated effort aimed at disrupting Israel's Iron Dome rocket-defense system.

But it has refused to share its intelligence, saying it did not want to reveal its sources of information.

HRW said it interviewed 18 Palestinians who were either witnesses or victims of the airstrikes. It said it also reviewed video footage and photos after the attacks, as well as statements by Israeli and Palestinian officials and militant groups. □

Associated Press

Aid groups: Millions in Syria, Iraq losing access to water

By BASSEM MROUE

Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Millions of people in Syria and Iraq are at risk of losing access to water, electricity and food amid rising temperatures,

record low water levels due to lack of rainfall and drought, international aid groups warned Monday.

The two neighboring countries, both battered by years of conflict and mis-

management, are in need of rapid action to combat severe water shortages, the groups said. The drought is also disrupting electricity supplies as low water levels impact dams, which in turn impact essential infrastructure, including health facilities.

More than 12 million people in both countries are affected, including 5 million in Syria who are directly dependent on the Euphrates River. In Iraq, the loss of access to water from the Euphrates and Tigris River, and drought, threaten at least 7 million people.

Some 400 square kilometers (154 square miles) of agricultural land faces drought, the groups said, adding that two dams in northern Syria, supplying

power to 3 million people, face imminent closure.

Carsten Hansen, regional director for the Norwegian Refugee Council, one of the aid groups behind the warning, said that for hundreds of thousands of Iraqis still displaced and many more still fleeing for their lives in Syria, the unfolding water crisis "will soon become an unprecedented catastrophe pushing more into displacement."

Other aid groups included Mercy Corps, the Danish Refugee Council, CARE International, ACTED and Action Against Hunger.

They warned that several Syrian provinces including Hassakah, Aleppo and Raqqah in the north and Deir el-Zour in the east have witnessed a rise in water-borne

diseases. The areas include displacement settlements housing tens of thousands of people displaced in Syria's 10-year conflict.

CARE's regional chief for Mideast and North Africa, Nirvana Shawky, urged authorities and donor governments to act swiftly to save lives. The latest crisis comes on top of war, COVID-19 and severe economic decline, she said.

Severe water shortages have also hit Lebanon, which is mired in the worst economic and financial crisis in its modern history, where more than 4 million people — mainly vulnerable children and families — face critical water shortages in the coming days, the U.N.'s children agency warned last week. □



Trash piles up in the heavily polluted Litani River, in Saghbin, Bekaa valley, eastern Lebanon, June 20, 2021.

Associated Press

New U.S. sanctions target Eritrea over Ethiopia's Tigray war

By CARA ANNA

Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — The United States on Monday imposed new sanctions over Ethiopia's deadly Tigray conflict as hundreds of thousands of people face famine conditions under a government blockade the U.S. has called a "siege" and fighting spreads into other parts of the country. The Treasury Department in a statement said the chief of staff of the defense forces of neighboring Eritrea, Filipos Woldeyohannes, was sanctioned under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act for leading an entity accused of "despicable acts" including massacres, widespread sexual assault and the executions of boys. The statement again calls on Eritrea to remove its soldiers from Ethiopia's Tigray region permanently. The nine-month war has killed thousands of people and left observers shocked as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, teamed up with former enemy Eritrea to wage war on the Tigray forces, with civilians not spared. Scores of witnesses have



In this Thursday, May 6, 2021 file photo, a farmer Teklemariam Gebremichael, who said he was shot by Eritrean forces in Enticho six months before and is still recovering, speaks to a doctor, left, at the Ayder Referral Hospital in Mekele, in the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia.

Associated Press

described to The Associated Press abuses such as gang-rapes, the destruction of health centers, the burning of crops and forced expulsions. Eritreans were often accused of some of the worst abuses. Ethiopia's government denied their presence in Tigray for months. "The (Eritrean Defense Forces) have purposely shot civilians in the street

and carried out systematic house-to-house searches, executing men and boys, and have forcibly evicted Tigrayan families from their residences and taken over their houses and property," the new U.S. statement said.

Eritrea's foreign ministry in a statement called the accusations unacceptable and challenged the U.S. to "bring the case to

signaled it was also losing patience with Ethiopia, Africa's second-most populous country, suspending millions of dollars in aid to a key security ally in the Horn of Africa and imposing visa restrictions on unnamed Ethiopians involved in the war.

The Tigray forces have since retaken much of the Tigray region of 6 million people, forcing Ethiopian and Eritrean soldiers to retreat and regroup.

But "the United States is concerned that large numbers of (Eritrean Defense Forces) have re-entered Ethiopia, after withdrawing in June," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

The Tigray forces have now crossed into the Amhara and Afar regions, ignoring calls from the U.S. and United Nations to withdraw and vowing to press as far as the capital, Addis Ababa, to end the hostilities. Hundreds of thousands of people in Amhara and Afar have fled their advance, some alleging abuses against civilians. □

Officials: Egypt closes Gaza border amid tensions with Hamas

By SAMY MAGDY

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt closed its main border crossing point with the Gaza Strip on Monday amid tensions with the territory's militant Hamas rulers, officials said. It was the first time the Rafah crossing was shuttered during a workday since early this year. Egyptian authorities had kept it open during the 11-day war between Israel and Hamas in May.

According to the Egyptian officials, the closure was connected to Cairo's efforts to broker a long-term cease-fire between Israel and Hamas. It was not immediately clear how long the closure would last, the officials said.



Protestors hurl stones at Israeli troops near the fence of Gaza Strip border with Israel, during a protest marking the anniversary of a 1969 arson attack at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque by an Australian tourist later found to be mentally ill, east of Gaza City, Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021.

Associated Press

One of the officials said the move was meant to pressure Hamas because of the "differences" between Cairo and the militant

group over lack of progress in both the Egyptian-led, indirect talks with Israel, and also efforts to reconcile Palestinian factions. □

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This luxury residential resort with various types of homes has many amenities such as swimming pools, restaurant, bar, offices, meeting rooms, gym, wellness and more. The combination of the beautiful Dutch modern international architecture and the Aruban palm trees creates a luxurious Aruban feeling and relaxed atmosphere in this resort. Tuscany Residence Aruba is the perfect choice for couples and families. Bas de Groot, Managing Director of Tuscany Residence Aruba adds, "We differ from traditional building, our design distinguishes itself." At 8 minutes' walk from Palm Beach, designed in a European style with high-quality materials, on property land and with buying possibilities from condos to townhouses to villas, Tuscany Residence is a dream comes true.



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De Groot adds, "Our project is in continuous construction which builds confidence. He continues saying that maintenance, property management, rental program and safety are taken care of. "You can log in from abroad and manage your property for rental or view your administration." The great thing about Tuscany is that it offers everything equal to a resort but you do not need to wait for an elevator to bring you up, worry about parking space or noisy neighbors. "We have got space and different size offerings making this more a community feel rather than a packed condo building." He also emphasizes that the location is one of the best on Aruba as it is quiet and close to Palm Beach.

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For an impression of Daimari Water Villas have a look at the website: <https://www.tuscany-residencearuba.com/en/news>. For more information please contact Bas de Groot by phone +297-7332424 or email bas@tuscanyresidencearuba.com. □

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Article by Etnia Nativa

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Shells are not for souvenirs

Episode CXVIII- 118

NOORD - We know that the massive industry devastates marine life and its habitat worldwide. At least 50,000 mollusk species inhabit the Earth. Whereas some shells are harvested for their meat, others like the chambered nautilus, known for its beautiful, coiled multi-colored protective casings are collected solely for decorative purposes.

Currently marine protected areas vary in type and range from wildlife refuges to research facilities. Within these areas, human activity is restricted for conservation purposes to protect natural as much as cultural resources. Today it is prohibited by law to take shells or

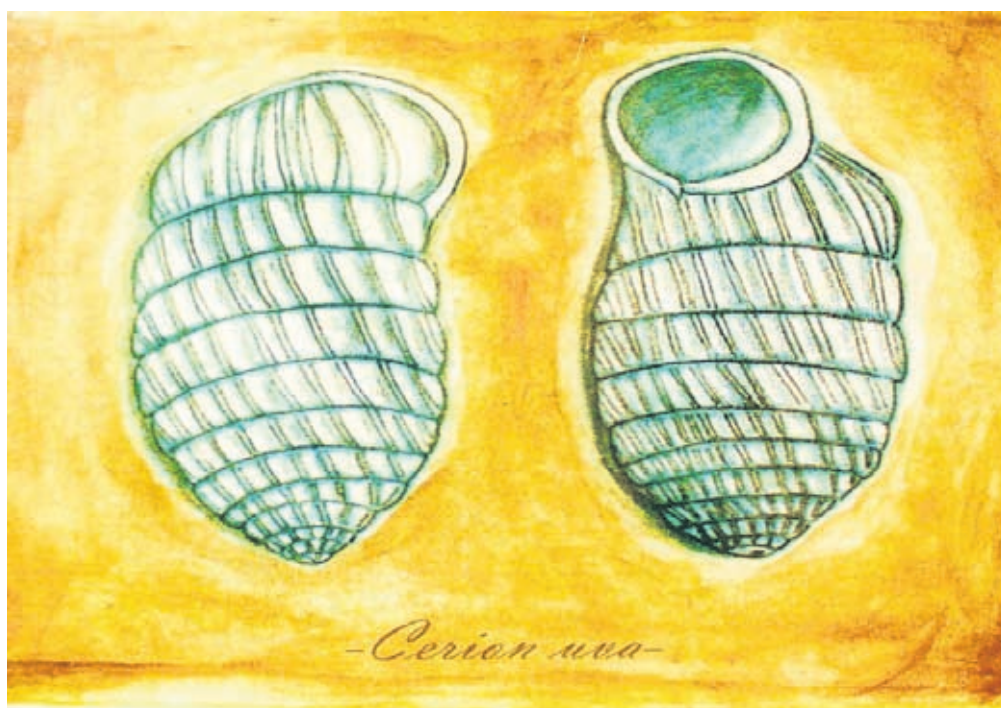
anything made with or out shells of the island. However this was not always the case since many marine shells were used to make rhythms, body decoration, tools and weapons since the existence of man, raw marine materials were scrutinized for the elaboration of all kinds of unimaginable artifacts and as a useful ingredients and a variety of purposes for ancient Arubans.

Tribal artisans were highly regarded artists and handymen of a people. Some were able to transfer spiritual powers in their work, through prayers or blessings. Survival and culture go hand in hand and the artisan uses everything he can put into his hands.



Tribal royalties, objects, ornaments, war and hunting equipment, etc. They had their physical purpose, as well as a symbolic and spiritual connection value. The goal of exhibiting social distinction or status. It had its incessant demand when it came to the hand and quality of experienced craftsmen to supply these social outfits. These artistic creations worked perfectly as a medal of bravery for a warrior as a token of appreciation or as a tired magic totem, a "counter" to ward off omens and bad spells. Others had to promote healing and spread cleansing powers. However, as a symbol of political status and valued

as a trade item. Strombus shells were on many occasions the basic material used in the manufacture of the so-called Quiripa. Having one or more holes and some cases a semi-drilled hole that is believed still to be perforated. Many "button" as Aruban's calls these shell beads since their similarity to a button. Many were rescued during salvage archaeological excavations in Santa Cruz, Aruba. Santa Cruz was a highly organized settlement and important town during Aruba's Ceramic Period. There is even an area in Sta. Cruz called "Boton" because of the many shell buttons that were found in that area. □



To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades. Mail us at etnianaativa03@gmail.com or WhatsApp 297 592 2702 to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels.

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Unraveling the mysteries of the Saba Bank: DCNA tiger shark expedition 2021

SABA - For the first time on the Saba Bank, an expedition team was able to successfully assess the shark diversity by attaching five satellite tags and confirming pregnancy stages by ultrasound of two species of sharks. This research advancement resulted in assessing 56 sharks, including 16 Tiger sharks with one confirmed early-stage pregnancy, and the first tagged male in the region. These details inform us that the Saba Bank's important role in the shark populations of the North-Eastern and wider Caribbean Region have yet to be unlocked. This information is crucial to better protect sharks within the Dutch Caribbean's Yarari Marine Mammal and Shark Sanctuary as well as beyond.

Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) along with the Protected Area Management Organizations of the Dutch Caribbean: Saba Conservation Foundation (SCF), Nature Foundation St. Maarten (NFSXM), St. Eustatius National Parks (STENAPA), STINAPA Bonaire, the Aruba National Parks Foundation (FPNA), the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) and World Wildlife Fund for Nature- The Netherlands (WWF-NL) led a team on the Saba Bank in collaboration with Arizona State University, University of Groningen, Beneath the Waves and funded by the Biodiversity Fund of the World Wildlife Fund for Nature- The Netherlands (WWF-NL).

This week-long ocean research expedition aimed to understand the stages of the reproductive cycle of tiger sharks on the Saba Bank. Tadzio Bervoets, Director of DCNA and expedition leader adds "It is critical to collect the data necessary to advance the conservation actions for species of sharks in the Caribbean Region and with the data collected over the last week we have been able to get a clear picture of the important role the Saba Bank plays". This expedition built upon previous research and expertise from collaborating scientists.

Throughout the week, the team was able to deploy five satellite tags on the dorsal fin of tiger sharks which will allow tracking of the animals over an extended period of time. The ultrasounds which were taken using high technology imagery to determine the maturity and pregnancy stage supported by Brooke Anderson, Ph.D. candidate of Dr. James Sulikowski's Lab, Arizona State University show that the Saba Bank is a reproductive area for IUCN Near Threatened listed species tiger and the IUCN endangered listed Caribbean Reef Shark. One of the female tiger sharks was confirmed with an early stage pregnancy and boasted a total length of 251cm. This multidisciplinary research approach is necessary for taking the first steps in understanding the reproductive life cycle for the species in the region.



One of the mysteries which resulted was the first tagged male on the Saba Bank sized at 306 cm and later named Maestro Angelo. While it is common to find females, it was surprising to encounter male tiger sharks during the research. Due to the lack of research done previously on these sharks on the Saba Bank, it became evident as to why there is a need to emphasize the importance and need for scientific research into these species.

Expeditions brought forward by the protected area management organizations, such as this one, support the necessary research needed for data-driven management solutions. These results will be used to help steer future research activities, inform local governments on the significant impact these species and their habitats have on ecotourism, and ultimately strengthen conservation policies. Ayumi Kuramae, Saba Bank Management Unit Officer shared the importance of this study, "Through previous tagging expeditions it was clear that the tiger sharks tagged on the Saba Bank can travel as far south as Grenada, crossing many nations' borders. This shows the importance of protecting the species not only in our waters, but region wide. Seeing male and female tiger sharks together of different life stages, shows us that protection of these species in our water is vital since we may be protecting the future generation of tiger sharks in the region. A decrease in the number of sharks can affect the overall fish stocks which leads to a disturbed natural balance in the sea. Saba, for example, highly depends on fisheries and dive tourism as part of the local economy which also relies on a healthy fish stocks. Thus, understanding the role of these apex predators is extremely important".

After gazetting, the Yarari Marine Mammal and Shark Sanctuary will encompass the exclusive economic zone waters of the Saba Bank along with Saba, Bonaire and Statia. This sanctuary has the intention to provide a safe place for these animals, but without supportive data and knowledge, it is difficult to ensure they receive the appropriate protection measures. In order to survive, tiger sharks may use the Saba Bank as a key habitat for different stages of their life cycle but are known to travel to other regions during different life stages, making them a trans-boundary species. This expedition will help identify where larger, multi-national marine protected areas across the Caribbean should be to protect these species during their whole life cycle. □

Kimberly Palmer: How to bounce back when your income drops

By **KIMBERLY PALMER**
of NerdWallet

Losing income is never easy, but it's become increasingly common over the last year and a half: According to the Pew Research Center, 44 percent of U.S. adults say their household has experienced either job loss (including temporarily) or a pay cut since the beginning of the pandemic, with Hispanic and Asian adults most likely to say so. That creates an incredible strain as people scramble to cover basic expenses like food and housing as well as monthly bills and everyday expenses, even if the reduction in income is temporary. Having a sense of your budget and avoiding procrastination is the key to doing well post-pay cut, says certified financial planner Manisha Thakor, founder of MoneyZen, a financial educational consultancy in Portland, Oregon. She says your odds of surviving and perhaps thriving go up exponentially "if you know your expenses beforehand, immediately acknowledge something bad has happened and you need to adjust them — and open your mind to the notion that it's really likely that by downsizing, you could actually end up having a richer life."

ACKNOWLEDGE THE EMOTIONS

"It's OK to admit that it's a crappy situation and you are going through it. I think



A customer wears a mask as she waits to get a receipt at a register in Target store in Vernon Hills, Ill., Sunday, May 23, 2021.

Associated Press

a lot of people don't give themselves that grace," says Athena Valentine Lent, founder of the Money Smart Latina website. There can be grief involved in losing income as you mourn your previous lifestyle, says Daisy Luther, founder of The Frugalite website. "I grew up in a well-to-do family and never heard, 'We can't afford that,' and then got divorced and I had to accept that my life had changed," she says. She could no longer go out to pizza with her kids every Friday night, for example. Gym memberships and nail salon visits were out, too. She suggests giving yourself a set amount of time to feel

sad and then start focusing on how you are going to move on.

AUDIT YOUR SPENDING

If you review all of your spending, Thakor says, then you can get tactical about which items to cut: "Anything you're spending money on that doesn't bring you joy, like cable bills, activities for kids, things that have crept into your life about 'who looks the best?' — just step out of that competition," Thakor advises.

Lent adds that you can make trade-offs: "I might need the Internet but not cable. I need a phone, but not that extra stuff on the phone plan. I need groceries, but I don't need to eat

out. I don't need Netflix, I can go to the library. Anything you don't need to spend on, don't spend it," she says.

ZERO IN ON FOOD

Food is a major spending category for a lot of people, and it's a prime target for cuts, says Valerie Rind, author of "Gold Diggers and Deadbeat Dads: True Stories of Friends, Family, and Financial Ruin," who experienced a major income drop when she changed careers about 16 years ago.

"I cut back on eating out, even though I like it and I'm not much of a cook," she says. She also changed the way she shopped for groceries, bypassing the \$4

orange juice and using a crock pot for more meals, which also generated leftovers for the freezer.

ADJUST YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Thakor suggests asking yourself if you could get by with less, such as whether you can trade in for more economical vehicles or consider having only one car. "People are driving more expensive cars than they can comfortably afford. Look at pre-owned certified cars," she suggests. It's easier to handle income loss, even a temporary one, without a large car payment each month.

RELISH THE CHALLENGE OF BEING FRUGAL

Luther suggests treating frugality like a game. When it comes to food, home decor or an accessory, she suggests asking yourself if you can make it for less than the cost of purchasing it.

"It really can be a lot of fun," she says. She enjoys growing tomatoes and lettuce to make her own salads, which she estimates saves at least \$10 a week.

SAVE UP FOR NEXT TIME

If you've had to deplete your emergency fund or don't have one, consider deepening your cuts to allow savings that will cushion you in the next financial crisis.

Thakor suggests a \$2,000 emergency fund goal and then continuing to build — but even \$500 can protect you from financial shocks. □

Pfizer to pay \$2.26B for cancer treatment developer Trillium

By The Associated Press

Pfizer is spending more than \$2 billion in cash to buy a drugmaker focused on cancer treatments. Pfizer will pay \$18.50 for each share of Trillium Therapeutics Inc., or more than double the stock's 60-day weighted average price. Trillium has no products on the market. Its potential treatments include biologics that aim to prime a patient's immune system to detect and destroy cancer cells. Its two lead candidates are

in early-stage testing and focus on hematology. That includes blood, bone marrow and lymph node cancers like leukemia or lymphoma. The deal announced Monday will need approval from Trillium shareholders. Pfizer, based in New York, invested \$25 million in Trillium last September, and one of the leaders of Pfizer's cancer research was named to Trillium's scientific advisory board. Pfizer Inc. said last month that its COVID-19 vaccine

brought in nearly half of its second-quarter revenue, but cancer treatments also have been a growing sales generator for the company. Cancer treatments brought in \$10.9 billion in revenue last year, and Pfizer's oncology products include treatments for breast, colorectal, blood and lung cancers. Pfizer's stock climbed almost 3% at the opening bell. Shares of Trillium, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, nearly tripled to \$17.73. □



In this Feb. 5, 2021, file photo, the Pfizer logo is displayed at the company's headquarters in New York.

Associated Press

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Lynx
- 7 Past due
- 11 Noted cow owner
- 12 Gobi setting
- 13 Spider-Man's alter ego
- 15 Like Santa's suit
- 16 Lobster part
- 18 Finishes
- 21 Churlish sort
- 22 Burden-some
- 24 Museum focus
- 25 Flying mammal
- 26 In addition
- 27 Boards, as a train
- 29 Poker game
- 30 Elevator part
- 31 Edinburgh native
- 32 It's worth ten sawbucks
- 34 The Hulk's alter ego
- 40 Move slowly
- 41 Matador's foe
- 42 Woodland grazer
- 43 Toady

DOWN

- 1 Jazz style
- 2 Flamenco cry
- 3 Wager
- 4 Roman ruler
- 5 Cupid's missile
- 6 Keyboard goof
- 7 Voice box
- 8 Inquire
- 9 Even score
- 10 Stirrup setting
- 14 Bothered
- 16 Hollowed out
- 17 State game
- 19 "The same"

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Yesterday's answer

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 20 Pig part | 33 Follow the rules |
| 21 Do a checkout | 34 Sleep spot |
| 22 Sandy color | 35 "Norma —" |
| 23 Zeus or | 36 Take advantage of |
| 25 Carried | 37 — de guerre |
| 28 Field game | 38 History stretch |
| 29 Perfumes | 39 Friend of Harry and Hermione |
| 31 Hackneyed | |

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42					43				

8-24

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-24

CRYPTOQUOTE

IIMRK RPMUUKKJ. IIMZ.
MEC HZBONZMNXGE AD
OKKFXEJ GBN FEGVUKCJIK MEC
GIIGZNBEXNXKO HGZ JZGVNP.

IIMED SMXZKEM

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: SOMETIMES THE BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT IN LIFE IS TO FIND YOURSELF — LUISA FERNANDA CICERO

Insider Q&A: Making the online world safe for children



This image taken from video shows Filmmaker Beeban Kidron during a Zoom interview with the Associated Press on Aug. 5, 2021.

By FRANK BAJAK
AP Technology Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Filmmaker Beeban Kidron, a member of Britain's House of Lords, began advocating for online child protection after directing "InRealLife," a 2012 film about kids and the internet. She has been a driving force behind a U.K. law, which takes effect Sept. 2, that sets a code of conduct for online services designed to shield the under-18 crowd.

The so-called Age Appropriate Design Code comprises 15 standards for making sure children's best interests are the prime consideration in the design of online services. It is the first law of its kind and, because the internet is global, the tech sector is already reacting as a one-year transition expires. Violators will face the same penalties for noncompliance as under the EU General Data Protection Regulation, four percent of global revenues or \$25 million.

Kidron has combined intense lobbying in Silicon Valley and Washington, D.C. with research and advocacy through the non-profit she founded, 5Rights Foundation. She predicts we're only just "in the foothills" of reform and expects more action from online services in the next few weeks.

The questions and answers in her recent interview with The Associated Press have been edited for length and clarity.

Q: You had a profound realization when you were

Associated Press making "InRealLife" that set you on this course?

A: The people who consider themselves the internet's founders were proud of a vision to treat all users equally. But that meant treating a child as an adult. I saw that kids couldn't cope with the adult world. Pornography and violence and unwanted contact were part of it. But it's much more. It's the hostility, the fake news, the popularity matrix, the commercialization and commoditization of childhood — a very reactionary and regressive force against the notion of children and childhood.

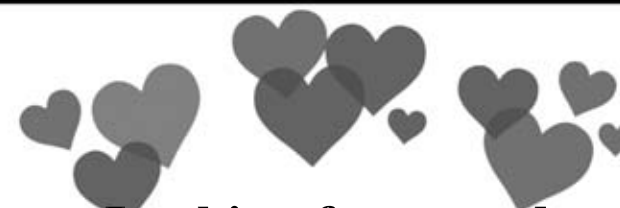
Q: The digital world is not currently a safe place for kids to learn, explore and play, U.K. Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham said in advocating the systematic change the design code aims to

bring. How does it do that?

A: It says children must be guaranteed a higher bar of privacy and consideration. So, for example, you must not reveal their exact location. That's dangerous for a kid. You also can't economically exploit what you know about them (from surveilling their online activity). In the past few weeks we've seen some related action. TikTok and Instagram have stopped direct messaging by unknown adults to children under the age of 16. YouTube introduced age verification for adult content (among other changes).

Q: Facebook's child-focused changes for Instagram — initially being applied in the U.S., Britain, Australia, France and Japan — include narrowing the scope of targeted ads that teens receive. It says they will now only get ads based on their age, gender and location. Is that enough? Instagram still collects data on teens' social interactions online.

A: No, we want more. But I don't think you can underestimate the huge shift that has occurred already. This is a very complex global industry and there will be many pieces of follow-on legislation. We've proven that the online world can be redesigned on principles. □



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WHO head calls for two-month vaccine booster moratorium

By **JUSTIN SPIKE**
Associated Press
BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP)
— The head of the World Health Organization on Monday called for a two-month moratorium on administering booster shots of COVID-19 vaccines as a means of reducing

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global vaccine inequality and preventing the emergence of new coronavirus variants. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters in Hungary's capital, Budapest, that he was "really disappointed" with the scope of vaccine donations worldwide as many countries struggle to provide first and second doses to more than small fractions of their populations while wealthier nations maintain growing vaccine stockpiles.

Tedros called on countries offering third vaccine doses "to share what can be used for boosters with other countries so (they) can increase their first and second vaccination coverage." Several countries including the United States, Israel, and Hungary, as well as others in Europe, the Middle East and Asia, are already offering or planning to offer their populations COVID-19 booster shots. □



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Q&A: Jason Momoa, Isabela Merced form a father-daughter bond

By **LINDSEY BAHR**
AP Film Writer

Jason Momoa doesn't get to play many ordinary guys. He's Aquaman. He's Khal Drogo. He's Conan the Barbarian. It's part of the reason why he wanted to be in "Sweet Girl," a new action drama out on Netflix. In the film he's an ordinary Pittsburgh father named Ray Cooper who vows to get revenge against a pharmaceutical company he blames for his wife's death. As a father himself, it was a natural fit, and he got to hand pick the actress who'd play his on screen daughter: "Instant Family's" Isabela Merced. Momoa and Merced spoke to the AP about the film and forming a bond on screen and off. Remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: Jason, how do you go about choosing someone to play your daughter?

MOMOA: The whole cast was full of my first picks. But it was all about Isabela. We had some mutual friends and I just thought she would be perfect to play my daughter. I texted or something, probably sent out a bunch of love and aloha, and thank God she said yes because I don't know who else I would have hired.

AP: Do you remember your first meeting?

MOMOA: I was very excited to meet her. She was very reserved. And I was probably extremely nervous. But we loosened up. We went



This image released by Netflix shows Jason Momoa, left, and Isabela Merced in a scene from "Sweet Girl."

Associated Press

and looked at the car and I have all these pictures from the first time we met. She was just itty bitty. So I started calling her Oompa Loompa. And so that became her nickname. But she warmed up. We hit it off. We're very similar in our styles.

MERCED: I hadn't watched a single episode of "Game of Thrones." I still haven't. And I'm so sorry.

MOMOA: Don't watch it. That's not how you want to see your father.

MERCED: I had seen him in "Aquaman" in some theater in my hometown and my little brother loves him and I loved him in that movie. And so obviously I knew who he was. But you

never know. How people present themselves is usually different than how they are. But with him, he's just the same. If anything, he's more loving. Once you get close to him and he realizes you can trust him ... it's the same way with me too. I wasn't going to be lovey-dovey with everyone on the first day. He had to gain my trust too.

AP: Is that easier to do when you're shooting on location, like you did with this film in Pittsburgh?

MERCED: Yeah, you're kind of isolated with those people. We would go out to dinner pretty much every other night. We would dance. We would eat sushi. We had a great time. I'm from Cleveland, there's like

a rivalry between (the cities), but I don't really care, like, I don't know, like leave that to the old folks. I love Pittsburgh, it literally looks like Cleveland.

MOMOA: (laughs) Leave it to the old folks.

AP: And I understand Isabela was doing her own stunts too.

MERCED: I think the only reason I did most of my stunts in this movie was because of the amazing stunt team. It was all about the trust that created between each other.

MOMOA: That's where I felt most like a dad to her. Like I knew she could act, I knew she was beautiful, I knew she would play this role great, but I didn't know she could fight like that at

that level. I was just blown away. I'm extremely excited for her career and for people to see this movie because she's a little force. And that's coming from me who pretty much only does action. You can't just teach that. You have to have that fire in you.

AP: Jason, you produced this and it's been a bit of a passion project. Why did you want to throw your weight behind it?

MOMOA: I'm not in too many contemporary pieces. I wanted to play a bit of an everyday man. And it tackles some amazing topics and it has a phenomenal twist. And it gave me the opportunity to put all my resources of 20 years into it, from stunts to wardrobe down to the casting. It was a wonderful, smooth-running production.

And for me, I have two daughters and it's a totally different bond than, you know, with my son. It would be a whole different energy. So I just feel like what Isabela offers, it's like how I am with my baby girl. There's moments in the movie where it just cracks me open. I have never really behaved that way in a movie before.

AP: Do you think this is the kind of movie fathers and daughters can watch together?

MOMOA: Absolutely. I got some of the best compliments in my life from my children when we watched this. It was really fun to watch it with them. □



This cover image released by Knopf shows "Skinship," stories by Yoon Choi.

Associated Press

Review: Examining Korean American duality in 'Skinship'

ASHLEY DUONG
Associated Press

With fine attention to detail, Yoon Choi's fictional debut "Skinship" welcomes readers into the lives of immigrant and first-generation Korean Americans. The collection of short stories examines characters of various circumstances. From a school-aged student making her first friend in America to an autistic piano teacher, each chapter is a different take on how life, culture and language interact as characters navigate unfamiliar places. Choi opens with a piece on disil-

lusionment and longing. Readers follow a young Soo as she reunites with her husband, Jae, in New Jersey after several years apart. Soo remained in Korea as Jae attempted to forge a better life for the couple in the new country. Soo's excitement fades on a long car ride from the airport to a run-down convenience store — "Our store," Jae tells her. An older Soo later wonders about the life she would have had if she had chosen to stay in Korea and marry someone other than Jae. Each chapter takes on a distinct voice and perspective, highlighting

the intimacies perhaps known only by those who straddle the fence of two worlds. Through Sae-Ri, a mother who leaves her son in Korea for an arranged marriage to an American, Choi brings into focus the clashes between the ways of Sae-Ri's home country and the new one she finds herself living in. These differences become more distinct after she reveals the truth of her son to her American family.

Her collection is a fresh take on the experience of newcomers to America — stories of love, disappointment and sacrifice. □

Nordqvist wins Women's British Open for 3rd major title

CARNOUSTIE, Scotland (AP)

— Anna Nordqvist kept her ball out of trouble to make a routine par at the last and win the Women's British Open for a third major title.

For playing partner Nanna Koerstz Madsen, her 72nd hole of the tournament could hardly have been more traumatic.

The Scandinavians were tied for the lead on 12-under par as they made their way down the famous No. 18 at Carnoustie on Sunday, with even their tee shots unable to really separate them.

After Nordqvist landed her approach from the middle of the fairway safely on the green and 25 feet from the pin, Koerstz Madsen turned away in disgust as she pushed her shot from the light rough on the left into a horseshoe-shaped green-side bunker on the right.

Facing a plugged ball and a downhill lie at the back of the bunker, Koerstz Madsen shanked a shot that flew sideways and almost out of bounds at the back of the green. The Danish player's chip from straggly rough fell short and left of the cup, leaving Nordqvist with two putts for the title. The second was a tap-in from a couple of inches, securing a one-shot victory on what



Sweden's Anna Nordqvist poses for the media holding the trophy after winning the Women's British Open golf championship, during the presentation ceremony in Carnoustie, Scotland, Sunday, Aug. 22, 2021.

proved to be a shootout in perfect conditions over the storied Scottish links.

"The only thing I could really control was myself," said Nordqvist, who closed with a 3-under 69. "It was going to be my time."

Three players — Lizette Salas (69), 2018 champion Georgia Hall (67) and Madeline Sagstrom (68) — tied for second place, with a double bogey at the last dropping Koerstz Madsen (71) into a tie for fifth with Minjee Lee (66).

By adding the Women's

Open to her victories at the 2009 LPGA Championship and the 2017 Evian Championship, the 34-year-old Swede became just the third European woman — after Annika Sorenstam and Laura Davies — to have won three or more majors. She received a check of \$870,000 from the \$5.8 million purse, the largest in women's golf.

When it was all over, Nordqvist was joined on the 18th green by her husband, Kevin McAlpine, a former Scottish Amateur champi-

on who is from Dundee, a city barely 20 minutes from Carnoustie. On Christmas trips back to Scotland, the couple play the storied links course that can often bring players to their knees but was defenseless Sunday because of little wind and almost balmy temperatures.

A third round of 65 — the lowest round of the week — set up Nordqvist's first win in four years, since the Evian Championship. But the title was up for grabs midway through the final

round when, at one stage, there were six players in a share of the lead on 9 under, including the overnight leaders in the final group.

In the end, what transpired on the 18th hole over a stretch of couple of hours decided the championship. First, Lee, who started five shots back but briefly moved into outright first place, made bogey to drop to 10 under overall after nearly going into the Barry Burn that runs in front of the green.

Sagstrom, playing in the third-to-last group, also bogeyed the last to fall out of a three-way share of the lead.

Salas missed a 15-foot birdie putt in the next-to-last group and couldn't get to 12 under, leaving Nordqvist and Koerstz Madsen to duel it out.

While Nordqvist played the 72nd hole perfectly, Koerstz Madsen lost her nerve as she sought to become the first Dane — male or female — to win a major.

"On 18, I tried to not make a mistake," she said, "and that was the only thing I shouldn't do."

It was the first year since 2010 that a South Korean failed to win a major.

The last 13 LPGA majors have been won by 13 different players. □

Associated Press

U.S. Open champs get lowest payout since 2012; total prizes up

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

The two singles champions at this year's U.S. Open will earn 35% less than in 2019, the last time the Grand Slam tennis tournament allowed spectators, while prize money for qualifying and the first three rounds of the main draw will rise as part of an overall increase. A year after banning fans entirely because of the coronavirus pandemic and lowering prize money due to lost revenue, the U.S. Tennis Association announced Monday that it will be boosting total player compensation to a record \$57.5 million, slightly more than the \$57.2 million in 2019. The figure was \$53.4

million in 2020. The title winners in singles each will be paid \$2.5 million, down from \$3 million last year and \$3.85 million two years ago. It is the lowest amount for the top prize at Flushing Meadows since 2012, when the singles champs each received \$1.9 million.

This year's singles runners-up will be paid \$1.25 million, a decrease from \$1.5 million in 2020 and \$1.9 million in 2019 — and the lowest since \$950,000 in 2012.

In 2020, U.S. Open qualifying was called off amid the pandemic. That part of this year's event starts Tuesday — unlike for the main tournament, no spectators will be permitted — and will award nearly \$6 million in

all, a jump from about \$3.5 million in 2019. Other examples of increases in singles: First-round prize money goes to \$75,000, a bump of 23% from \$61,000 in 2020 and of 29% from \$58,000 in 2019; second-round payouts go to \$115,000 from \$100,000 in 2020 and 2019; and third-round payouts go to \$180,000 from \$163,000 in 2020 and 2019.

Total prize money is going up for each competition, the USTA said: singles, doubles, mixed doubles and wheelchair tennis.

"We determined our round-by-round prize money allocations by engaging in an open dialogue with the players and the management of both tours," tour-



Naomi Osaka, of Japan, holds up the championship trophy after defeating Victoria Azarenka, of Belarus, in the women's singles final of the U.S. Open tennis championships in New York, in this Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020, file photo.

Associated Press

namment director Stacey Allaster said in a statement issued by the USTA. "We applaud their collective

leadership in directing the 2021 U.S. Open prize money to benefit the maximum number of players." □

Pacquiao ponders ring retirement, political plans after loss

By **GREG BEACHAM**

AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Manny Pacquiao sounded like a fighter on his way out and a politician on his way up. He might have concealed his battered face behind big sunglasses, but Pacquiao didn't hide behind excuses or denial after a discouraging unanimous-decision loss to Yordenis Ugás on Saturday night. Yes, Pacquiao disclosed that his legs cramped throughout the fight on the Vegas Strip, depriving him of the mobility that has always made his power so dangerous.

The eight-division world champion still acknowledged the larger fact that was obvious even to most of his devoted fans around the world: He deserved his loss to Ugás, a talented opponent who probably wouldn't have been much trouble for prime Pacman. And that might be a good reason to walk away.

"This sport is my passion," Pacquiao said. "That's why I'm still here fighting at the age of 42. I'm enjoying it, but sometimes you have to think about the response of your body. ... My mind, my heart, it's 100%. But my legs were cramping."

In the moments after he returned from a two-year ring absence with the loss to the rangy, resilient Ugás,



Manny Pacquiao, of the Philippines, reacts after a news conference after his loss to Yordenis Ugás, of Cuba, in a welterweight championship boxing match Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

Pacquiao repeatedly hinted he is planning to retire from boxing.

He is still alongside Canelo Álvarez as the two biggest active stars in the sport, yet Pacquiao (67-8-2) has never spoken so frankly about leaving behind 26 years in the pro fight game.

"I've done a lot for boxing, and boxing has done a lot for me," Pacquiao said. "I look forward to spending a lot of time thinking about my future in boxing."

Pacquiao's postfight comments included a sprinkling of such catchy, pre-written phrases — sort of like a stump speech by a politi-

cian.

Indeed, the Filipino senator's next fight is probably in the political ring: He is widely expected to enter the presidential race in the Philippines next month ahead of the May 2022 election.

"In my heart, I want to continue to fight," Pacquiao said. "But the thing is, I also have to consider my body. I've put it through a lot of things. Especially back in my country, there's a lot of things that I need to accomplish to help people. I want to be an inspiration to the Philippine people inside and outside the ring."

Countless athletes have

struggled mightily to find worthwhile ways to fill their time after retirement. That wouldn't be a problem for Pacquiao: His chaotic life won't get less busy, but it could be a bit more focused with only one career to consider.

If Pacquiao retires, he leaves boxing as one of the greats of his generation. Along with his stunning array of championship belts and his groundbreaking mobility across the sport's weight classes, Pacquiao will be remembered for his utter fearlessness in taking on countless larger foes without blinking.

Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's devoted trainer for most of the past two decades, acknowledged being "a little worried" about the champ. "He's boxed for a long time, and he's the best guy I've ever had," Roach said. "The best guy, the best fighter. I hate to see the day when he retires, but this could be it. We'll see what Manny decides."

Another scenario seems equally plausible at this point: Pacquiao doesn't win the presidency in nine months — he is behind several candidates in early polling — and he subsequently gets a highly lucrative opportunity to return to the ring late next year, when he will be nearly 44.

Given Pacquiao's competitive nature and his relatively expensive lifestyle, his self-awareness could be overcome by the rewards of the fight game.

But in the moments after this cramping, frustrated great lost for the first time in four years, Pacquiao was thinking deeply about both his current state and future priorities.

"This situation might finish my career in boxing," Pacquiao said. "But this is my statement to all the boxing fans all over the world: The most important thing is how we can help each other, especially in this pandemic." □



Iowa State players celebrate after the Fiesta Bowl NCAA college football game against Oregon in Glendale, Ariz., in this Saturday, Jan. 2, 2021, file photo.

Associated Press

By **DAVID BRANDT**

AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — The Fiesta Bowl Organization announced a multi-year partnership with Caesars

Entertainment on Monday, pairing one of the biggest postseason college football games with legal sports gambling in Arizona. It's the first partnership

Fiesta Bowl, Caesars announce sports betting partnership

between a college bowl game and a company that specializes in sports betting. Caesars will host fan lounges at the Fiesta Bowl in suburban Glendale and at the Guaranteed Rate Bowl, which is played at Chase Field in downtown Phoenix.

Sports betting is set to become legal in Arizona on Sept. 9.

Fans will be allowed to make bets at a sportsbook and bar on the plaza adjacent to Chase Field — which is also home to MLB's Arizona Diamondbacks, who also have a partner-

ship with Caesars — once the building is ready and goes through the required regulatory approvals. They can also use the Caesars Sportsbook app.

The partnership is another sign of just how accepted and widespread legal sports gambling has become in much of the United States. A partnership of this kind was once almost unthinkable in college sports.

"Five years ago this was probably taboo or you didn't even speak of it," Fiesta Bowl Chief Marketing Officer Jose Moreno said.

"But this is the evolution of sports as a whole and we're excited for it."

Caesars will also be the title partner of the Fiesta Bowl's pregame parties and be the presenting partner of the game's kickoff luncheon. Dan Shapiro, the chief development officer of Caesars Digital, said the partnership helps position the company to be a market leader in sports betting. "When this opportunity presented itself to be a part of the Fiesta Bowl and Guaranteed Rate Bowl, we really jumped on it," Shapiro said. □